

Comment on over-the-air broadcast television viewers, Docket 04-210, submitted by Albert Manfredi, Alexandria, VA.

Our household relies solely on over-the-air (OTA) TV for all of our TV viewing. At the moment, we have only analog NTSC reception capability. We have three (3) TV sets in the house, two of which rely on indoor antenna, and one uses an outdoor-mounted log periodic.

Age: 55 (myself and my wife)

Ethnicity: Caucasian (both)

Household income: \$125,000

Education: Master of Science, Bachelor of Arts

Location: Eastern Fairfax County, VA, Lee District (suburban)

We intend to continue relying on OTA after NTSC shutoff, if reception is possible. I'm waiting for the 5th generation Zenith or 4th generation Lynx chipsets to become available in set-top boxes before attempting a transition. If reception proves impractical, our plan is to subscribe to basic cable. However, we don't want to go this route.

Expect the price of STBs to fall to the \$100 range by 2006, which should bring them within the reach of most consumers. Do not expect any government assistance for this. Expect to continue to use our current TV sets for their display, and that integrated sets with built-in ATSC receivers will replace these as our current sets wear out.

Expect the added cost of ATSC tuners in TV sets of the near future to be small -- on the order of \$30-\$50 by 2006 or 2007, even if combined with digital cable tuning capability. This should present no significant hardship to anyone already able to afford television.

The FCC's ATSC tuner mandate, if combined with the voluntary digital cable integrated tuner agreement and a likely similar voluntary agreement with respect to satellite tuning, should make digital sets of the future as affordable or more affordable than the existing analog sets. If roughly 85 percent of households now rely on cable or DBS, their overall costs should decrease with integrated sets, because they will no longer need to buy or rent the external STBs. An external STB is bound to cost more, whether it is bought outright or paid over time, than the integrated receiver.

My contention is that integrated sets should soon be price competitive with any TV system used today, making government subsidies unnecessary in accomplishing this transition. If at all, I would expect government subsidy to be required only for a brief transitional period, when NTSC is initially shut down.